



# NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Rural Development

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## USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT AWARDS \$500,000 FOR THE DISTANCE LEARNING AND TELEMEDICINE PROGRAM

**TEMPLE, TEXAS, December 6, 2005**— Bryan Daniel, State Director of Texas USDA Rural Development, today announced the selection of Region XI Education Service Center as a recipient of the Distance Learning and Telemedicine (DLT) Grant Program.

The DLT funds will be used to provide consulting services to north Texas school districts aimed at improving student performance and increasing efficiency and effectiveness of school operations. Through improved connectivity and videoconferencing systems, local populations will receive instruction and programs by accessing available support, training, and assistance in language skills. Other benefits include professional development collaboration with community resources such as museums and Spanish-speaking providers. The project will benefit approximately 44,000 residents.

“Distance learning and telemedicine systems are powerful tools for rural Texas,” said Daniel. “Through technology, students and families can participate in classes not previously available to them, and people who live in rural areas can access expanded health care options.”

In Fiscal Year 2004, Texas was awarded \$1.4 million to be distributed through the Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant Program. The education projects helped schools provide students with advanced educational tools. Distance learning projects provide funding for computers and internet connections in schools and libraries. The vast array of study options available to rural students through distance learning technologies literally brings the world to their doorstep. Telemedicine projects are providing new and improved healthcare services beginning with patient diagnosis, through surgical procedures, and post-operative treatment.

USDA Rural Development strives to see that rural citizens can participate fully in the global economy by providing technical assistance, funding, and other programs that help rural Americans build strong economies to improve their quality of life. For further information regarding USDA Rural Development Programs, contact the State Office at (254) 742-9700 or visit our website at <http://rurdev.usda.gov/tx/>.

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